

HRA/Pride on the Plaza
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Queerly Different Collective
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June 27, 2011

TO: Donna Hatch: President Human Rights Alliance (HRA)
Santa Fe, Paul Collom: vice –president HRA Santa Fe, The Santa
Fe Pride committee and all those who participated in the
'cowboy and Indian' themed float at the 2011 Santa Fe Pride
parade.

Dear all,

We begin this letter of invitation and challenge by extending our deep thanks to you all for the tremendous amount of work, time and heart you put into Pride overall and the parade in particular. We recognize just how much the work always is and how frequently that goes unacknowledged; this letter by no means seeks to imply that we take your efforts lightly, nor for granted.

Yet, we come to you all with a deep sense of disquiet, outrage and dismay at the presence of the "cowboy and Indian" themed float in this years parade.

We were further disheartened to learn that when confronted by a First Nations member of our community your response was to dismiss the concerns clearly and repeatedly raised that the floats where offensive.

We write with feedback and challenge, with two specific requests and an invitation. We do so with the intention of fostering honest, constructive dialogue that builds accountability for us all when things are hard, mistakes are made and when transparent conflict resolution practices can re-build trust.

Our goal is to encourage the creating of specific actions and strategies that can appropriately address the injury and insult through acknowledgement, growth and change. We strongly believe this strengthens our community as a whole, builds our ability to organize across differences and increases everyone's capacity to honor, respect and include the many different identities within the broad label of LBGTQ.

The presence of the cowboy and Indian floats in the Santa Fe 2011 Pride parade

Perpetuates the following:

- The stereotypical portrayal of Native American Indians / First Nations and Indigenous peoples i.e. this was not a float done by and for Native American /Indian, First Nation Two Spirit/LBGTQ people.
- A climate along the parade and throughout Pride that enabled behavior and specific language that is insulting and offensive to FN2S people.
- The belief that it is acceptable for non-Indian, particularly white people, to imitate or appropriate Native American dress, culture, imagery, healing practices and ceremony.
- A value that Pride organizers and participants have no responsibility to be respectful to any First Nations /Native American communities, histories and cultures in general and to First Nations Two Spirit people (FN2S) people in particular.
- The myth that it was Europeans who "brought" queerness and gender variance to these lands.
- The myth of the "wild west" that negates the land theft, genocide and violence of that time and disrespects the survival, dignity and persistence of Indigenous people.

- The pervasive myth that the most prevalent experience of oppression that LBGTQ people live with is homophobia.
- The idea that any Pride, specifically the Santa Fe Pride Parade is a place where it is acceptable to have racially and ethnically disrespectful and derogatory themed floats and a climate where prejudice, ignorance and misinformation are tolerated.

We strongly urge you to meet the following requests

1. Respond to Ryan Rice's' (Mohawk, Santa Fe resident) letter of June 27th and comply with his request for accountability and redress with a public statement from the HRA.
2. Develop and implement clear guidelines for Pride 2012 that ensures this need never be repeated

Finally we respectfully encourage you to accept the following invitation to participate in a LBGTQ specific dismantling white supremacy/ anti-racism training. This intensive has been delivered at the National Lesbian and Gay Task Forces national conference Creating Change for five years as part of their Racial Justice institutes and can be provided locally on a donation only basis for all involved.

In struggle and hope,

Aaron Ambrose Santa Fe NM
 Sebastian Margaret Santa Fe, NM